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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First Baptist Church of Dallas members commit over \$115 million to recreate downtown campus: Congregation pledges to fund largest-ever U.S. church building project

DALLAS, May 16, 2010 – The 143-year-old First Baptist Church of Dallas today capped a six-month capital campaign, announcing that congregational response totaled \$115,062,000 – enabling the church to recreate its downtown campus for 21st century ministry. This represents the largest monetary amount ever pledged for a Protestant church building program in the U. S., according to consultants.

An overflow crowd of nearly 2,800 – many arriving more than two hours early to get a seat – packed the 1,600-seat sanctuary and three additional venues in the Criswell Center during a special single morning service, to be a part of this historic announcement and celebrate God's provision to move forward with development plans for an unprecedented facility.

The service was interrupted several times by applause. When the final figure was announced, the crowd spontaneously rose to its feet with a shout, many of them in tears.



DALLAS, MAY 16, 2010 – Dr. Robert Jeffress, pastor of First Baptist Church Dallas, looks on as Mark Lovvorn, chairman of the church's Planning and Development Committee, announces the congregation's historic capital campaign response totaling \$115,062,000 – the nation's largest-ever Protestant church building project – to recreate its downtown campus for 21st Century ministry.

"Success is a matter of perspective," said Dr. Robert Jeffress, First Baptist Dallas pastor. "But regardless of what measurement you use, God has granted us tremendous success today."

Referring to God's provision for the Israelites in the Old Testament account of their Exodus from Egypt, Dr. Jeffress added, "For generations to come, people will look at May 16, 2010 as a day that God parted the Red Sea and did a miracle for the people of First Baptist Church of Dallas."

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Highlights of the new campus will include a 3,000-seat, state-of-the-art worship center, a fountain plaza with a water tower topped by a cross, a new education building, hundreds more parking spaces and a sky bridge across St. Paul Street that will tie the different parts of the new campus into a unified whole. The historic sanctuary, which dates to 1890, will be retained as a site for weddings, funerals and other special events, and its steeple will be restored to its original height.

The new campus completes the circle of resources meeting the mind, body and spirit of the residents of Dallas, as First Baptist Dallas continues to be a shining beacon in the heart of the City for years to come. Dallas Mayor Tom Leppert, a member of the congregation and champion for the revitalization of downtown, noted the project will not only benefit church members, but will benefit everyone in the community, by providing an open and inviting atmosphere and additional parking.

“This is a critical and important investment in downtown Dallas,” Mayor Leppert said during a previous press conference. “It will have an impact on this community and what we're trying to accomplish of creating more of an urban setting that is vibrant and exciting and brings people downtown. This is going to be an exciting effort, not only in terms of Sunday but all the other different activities and what it will contribute.” If all goes according to plan, groundbreaking will be July 11, with construction completed in the spring of 2013.

“I am excited, not only about what this does for the Church, but also what it does for the downtown area,” Mayor Leppert said standing with Dr. Jeffress at a post announcement news conference. “This is an important part of what we are doing. There are so many great things going on, and this is near the top of the list.”

The vision of recreating a new campus has been one the church has held for many years, with past leaders – including Dr. W.A. Criswell, sharing the dream. In November, Dr. Jeffress announced a formal campaign to make it a reality, highlighting a proposed design. Despite capital campaign experts' estimations that the church could only raise approximately \$39 million, based on its annual budget, Dr. Jeffress shared a God-given vision for an impressive \$130 million campus, announcing the church had already received commitments for \$62 million.

“These past six months have been a time of great spiritual growth and sacrificial giving for our church,” said Dr. Jeffress. “We can tell you story after story of families who felt God calling them to give ‘x’ amount and did so obediently. Often, this gift was more than they thought they could initially sacrifice, but because of their obedience, God provided a supernatural blessing. This campaign’s success is not due to one man’s gift. It is due to all of God’s people giving sacrificially and obediently.”

The congregation heard two testimonies, including 9-year-old Nathan Denman, who raised \$505 in a garage sale of his toys. “You taught me that God sacrificed His son, Jesus, and a real sacrifice meant giving up something you love,” the young man told Dr. Jeffress from the pulpit.

Throughout the campaign, Dr. Jeffress and the architects refined the original design to ensure it was family-friendly and efficient while meeting all the church’s needs. Even before the pledges were made, the architects made minor changes to the design to improve its functionality without affecting ministry capacity and reduced the total cost of the campus plan to \$115 million.

“This capital campaign is not an end in itself,” Dr. Jeffress said. “The ultimate goal has always been to transform our campus in a way that would glorify God and better equip the

church for 21st century ministry. God understands the needs of First Baptist better than any of us, and He knew all along what the outcome of this campaign would be; He never has a Plan B. All that we have belongs to Him – our Creator – and He has blessed us with a great gift, which we will use to further convey His glory. We look forward to seeing how He will continually play a hand in His church’s future as we move forward with this project.”

For more information or to see video of Sunday’s service, visit www.firstdallas.org.

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